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Aspects of Śiva

Iconographic Traditions in Tamil Nadu

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

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Śiva is an ambivalent and complex divinity, represented in several forms (*mūrti*). *Mūrti* signifies manifestation, incarnation, and form. In His divine game (*līlā*) Śiva appears in various forms; he assumes divine, human, animal or hybrid forms. He manifests himself to vanquish demons, save the world or simply to test the devotion of gods, sages or men. The *Śatarudrasaṁhitā* of *Śivapurāṇa*, mentions that the incarnations of Śiva, the Omnipresent, are innumerable and describes some of them.

The forms of Śiva in sculptures are also highly varied. Here we have selected some of the most important in northern Tamil Nadu sculpted in stone or bronze idols that are worshipped also. Some of them are not related to any particular episode but symbolise philosophical and religious concepts.

The several aspects of Śiva are generally divided into groups of *saumya* or *anugraha* forms (peaceful forms where Śiva blesses his devotees) and *ugra* or *saṃhāra* forms (terrible and destructive forms).

Some of the images like Liṅgodbhava, Ekapādamūrti or Śarabha suggest the growing sectarian outlook. As an offshoot of the Bhakti movement in Tamil nadu (c. 650 to 950 A.D.) the concept of Śiva underwent changes and as a result we have images of Somaskanda and Kalyāṇasundara emphasizing family life. Conflicting cults lead to synthetic sculptural traditions of Śiva like Hari-Hara and Ardhanārīśvara. Similarly one can notice certain Brahmanical / non-Brahmanical traditions in sculptures like Bhikṣāṭana and Bhairava.

Besides these one can also classify the images on the basis of artisan styles during the Pallava, Chola, Pāṇḍya, Vijayanagara/Nāyak rules as well as Folk styles.

Again it is possible to classify the images into two broad categories viz. abstract vs concrete. Abstract forms are generally related to philosophy and

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concrete forms are related to rituals. Concrete images are always (except Somaskanda) found outside the Sanctum Sanctorum; abstract images viz. Svayambhu and Liṅga forms are always found inside the Sanctum Sanctorum. Lastly, images like Dakṣiṇāmūrti involve both philosophy and rituals.

The 24 forms of Śiva displayed in this exhibition and representative of the rich iconographic tradition of Tamil Nadu, are part of the French Institute's photolibrary, which has a collection of about 130,000 photographs on art, architecture and archeology from South India. The exhibitions is a result of the collaborative work of the teams of Indology (Karine Ladrech, a previous IFP Fellow under the guidance of François Grimal, Head of the Department of Indology, IFP, and member of the *Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient*, EFEO, with the collaboration of G. Vijayavenugopal, EFEO Researcher, Nicolas Dejenne, IFP Fellow, N. Murugesan, Archivist, Ramesh Kumar, Photographer, the Geomatics Laboratory (Danny Lo Seen) and the communication and editing services of the French Institute (Manisha Dolia and V. Josephine).

Finally, this exhibition is indebted to the French Embassy in India for its financial assistance and to the French Alliance of Pondicherry for its organizational support.

Denis Depommier
Director, French Institute
Pondicherry, 12 August 2002

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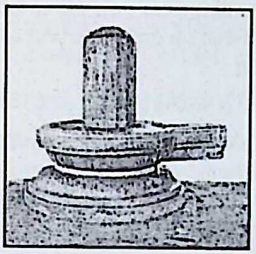

1. Liṅga (लिङ्ग, இலிங்கம்)

Liṅga signifies "sign". *Liṅga* is the symbol of transcendent Śiva and is the most common representation of Śiva in India. The *Śivapurāṇa* (*Koṭirudra-saṁhitā*) explains why Śiva is worshipped in the form of *Liṅga*. The Lord was testing the devotion of ascetics in *Dāruvana* forest, walking around completely naked and behaving indecently. He seduced the wives of the sages who flocked around him. The sages were furious and cursed him: "May his penis fall to the ground!" Śiva's phallus fell down immediately and consumed everything around him, enveloping the three worlds, terrifying the sages and the Gods. Brahmā told them that only Pārvatī in the guise of *yoni* (vagina, womb) could appease Śiva's *liṅga* and taught them the rituals to be performed to worship the *liṅga* on its pedestal. There are numerous types of *liṅga* described in texts, especially in *Kāmikāgama* and *Mayamata*.

For the different types of *liṅga*, see T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1997 (reprint), Vol. II, Part I, p. 75-102.

For *liṅga*'s meaning, see Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, Chap. 7.

Photo at left: Liṅga. Tiruvakkarai (South Arcot dt., Tindivanam tk.), Śiva-Chandraśekhara temple. Stone (IFI 10-11) Late Pallava / Early Chola, 9-10th cent. A.D.

Photo at right: Mukhaliṅga. Tiruvadigai (South Arcot dt., Cuddalore tk.), Śiva-Vīratteśwara temple. Stone. (IFI 10037-9) Late Pallava 8th - 9th cent. A.D. A face (mukha) is sculpted on the liṅga.

2. Liṅgodbhavamūrti (लिङ्गोद्भवमूर्ति, லிங்கோத்பவமூர்த்தி)

The birth of *liṅga*

The story of the birth of *liṅga* is narrated especially in the *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *Kūrmapurāṇa* and *Śivapurāṇa*. Brahmā and Viṣṇu had quarreled, each one claiming to be the creator of the universe. Śiva appeared in the form of an enormous pillar of fire. Both Brahmā and Viṣṇu tried to find the ends of this pillar. Brahmā assumed the guise of *haṃsa* (swan) and flew up in the air to search for the summit, while Viṣṇu assumed the form of a boar and dug the earth to find the bottom, but their attempts were futile. Śiva then manifested himself in the middle of the immeasurable fiery *liṅga* and thus revealed his superiority.

The Liṅgodbhavamūrti is described in *Kāraṇāgama*, *Kāmikāgama* and *Śilparatna*.

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Śiva is represented emerging from the *liṅga* in the *abhaya* (protection) and *varada* (offering) pose, the other two hands holding an axe and an antilope (*mṛga*), his most common attributes in South India. Brahmā is represented as a swan on the upper part of the *liṅga*, while Viṣṇu is represented as a boar on the lower part.

See T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 105-111.

Photo : Andankovil (Tanjavur dt., Valangaiman tk.), Śiva Svarṇapurīśvara temple. Stone 57 cm (IFI 11148-9). Late Chola period. Here the lower left hand of Śiva is resting on the hip instead of the varada pose prescribed in the Kāraṇāgama. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are represented twice in their anthropomorphic and animal aspects, hands joined in the Añjali pose rendering homage to Śiva.

3. Pāśupatamūrti (पाशुपतमूर्ति, பாசுபதமூர்த்தி)

This aspect of Śiva is not linked to any particular episode. It is described in *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, *Śilparatna* and *Uttarakāmikāgama*. Śiva Pāśupata is standing very erect (*samabhaṅga*). This is a peaceful aspect with four hands. His main hands are in the *abhaya* (protection) and *varada* (offering) pose, his backhands holding a trident on the right and a rosary or *Kapāla* (skull used as a bowl) on the left.

See T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 125-126.

Photo : Esālam (South Arcot dt., Viluppuram tk.), Śiva Rāmanādīśvara temple. Bronze 37 cm (IFI 9731-7). Late Chola period.

4. Dakṣiṇāmūrti (दक्षिणामूर्ति, தட்சிணாமூர்த்தி)

Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the aspect of Śiva as the teacher of yoga, arts and sciences. His name is sometimes explained by the fact that he was seated facing south (*dakṣiṇa*) when he taught the *ṛṣis* (sages). He is generally sculpted on the southern walls of temples.

Śiva-Dakṣiṇāmūrti is represented in several aspects, described in *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, *Uttarakāmikāgama* and *Śilparatna*.

i. Vyākhyāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti (व्याख्यानदक्षिणामूर्ति வியாக்யானதட்சிணாமூர்த்தி)

As a preacher of the *Śāstras*, Dakṣiṇāmūrti is represented under a tree, very serene and seated in *vīrāsana* (his right leg on the ground and left leg bent and resting on the right thigh). His right leg is sometimes resting on the dwarf *Apasmāra*. He has four hands: the front right hand is in the *jñānamudrā* (teaching) and front left hand is in the *varada* (offering) pose. The back right hand holds a rosary and the back left hand holds either fire or a snake. He is surrounded by *ṛṣis* who have come to learn the *Śāstras*.

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ii. Jñāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti (ज्ञानदक्षिणामूर्ति, ஞானதட்சிணாமூர்த்தி)

This form is similar to the preceding one except that the back left hand is holding a lotus and the front left hand is in the *abhaya* pose.

iii. Yoga Dakṣiṇāmūrti (योगदक्षिणामूर्ति, யோகதட்சிணாமூர்த்தி)

There are several descriptions of this aspect of Śiva. He is seated in the *yogāsana* posture. His legs are often held by a *yogapaṭṭa* (yoga belt) and adoring *ṛṣis* surround him.

iv. Vīṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti (वीणाधर दक्षिणामूर्ति, வீணாதரதட்சிணாமூர்த்தி)

Śiva teaching / playing music may be represented standing or sitting and may or may not be surrounded by *ṛṣis*. He can be easily identified as he is playing the *vīṇā* (sometimes the instrument is not sculpted but simply suggested by the player's gesture).

See T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 273-292.

Photo : Vyākhyāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti Tiruvothur, (Cheyyar tk, Tiruvannamalai dt.), Vedapurīśvara-Śiva temple. Bronze (IFI 11542-5). Late Chola period.

5. Maheśamūrti (महेशमूर्ति, மகேசமூர்த்தி)

According to Śaivaite *Āgama* literature, Maheśamūrti is the Supreme Lord, Creator, Protector and Destroyer. This aspect is described in detail in *Suprabhedāgama*. Maheśa has five heads, but only four are visible. Two of his ten hands are in the *varada* (left) and *abhaya* (right) posture. He is armed with a trident *(śūla)*, battle-axe, thunderbolt *(vajra)* and sword; on the left his attributes are shield, elephant goad, noose and bell.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, p. 379-386.

Photo : Dārāsuram (Tanjavur dt., Kumbakonam tk.), Śiva-Airāvateśvara temple. Stone (IFI 8488-1). 11-12th cent.A.D. Here Śiva Maheśvara has only four arms; the backhands bear a trident and battle axe while the front hands hold a rosary and water jug.

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6. Sadāśivamūrti (सदाशिवमूर्ति, சதாசிவமூர்த்தி)

The Auspicious Eternal

Sadāśiva is the Supreme Being, subtle, formless, beyond comprehension. However he is represented materially and this figure has been described in most of the *Āgamas*. The *Uttarakāmikāgama* gives the following description: he is standing on a lotus and has five heads and ten arms. The right hands hold a spear, trident, *khaṭvāṅga* (club with a human skull) and *abhaya* (protection) and *prasāda* (offering) poses, and the left hands, a snake, rosary, *ḍamaru* (small drum), lotus and *mātuluṅga* fruit (pomegranate).

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, p. 361-374.

Photo : Kanchipuram (Kanchipuram dt. and tk.) Śiva-Ekāmbareśvara temple. Stone (IFI 11913-1). 16th cent.A.D.

7. Ekapādatrimūrti, (एकपादत्रिमूर्ति, ஏகபாததிரிமூர்த்தி)

The term *trimūrti* ("three aspects") signifies the trinity of Brahmā the Creator, Viṣṇu the Protector of the cosmic order and Śiva the Destroyer.

Ekapādatrimūrti is described in *Uttarakāmikāgama*. He is standing very erect on only one leg (*ekapāda*: one leg) and has four arms. The front hands are in the *varada* and *abhaya* pose, the back hands hold the battle axe and black buck. Viṣṇu and Brahmā emerge from Śiva's sides, their hands joined in the *añjali* pose.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, p. 398-401.

Photo : Tiruvānāikka (Tiruchirappalli dt. & tk.), Śiva-Jambukeśvara temple. Stone (IFI 82-3). 17th-18th cent.A.D.

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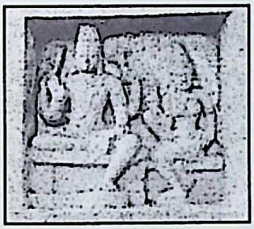
8. Vṛṣabhavāhanamūrti (वृषवाहनमूर्ति, ரிஷபவாகனமூர்த்தி)

One with bull as his vehicle.

This aspect is described in *Aṁsumadbhedāgama, Uttarakāmikāgama, Pūrvakāraṇāgama, Suprabhedāgama* and *Śilparatna*. Standing with his right leg placed firmly on the ground and the left leg slightly bent, His left hand is resting on the bull Nandi that is behind him. In his right hand he is carrying a crooked stick (*vakradaṇḍāyudha*). Axe and buck are held in the backhands. The goddess is standing next to her spouse, either to his right or left. She is holding a lotus in her right hand while the left-hand hangs down freely.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 352-356.

Photo : Kanchipuram (Kanchipuram dt. & tk.), Śiva- Ekāmbareśvara temple. Stone. (IFI 11909-5)17th - 18th cent.A.D. Here Śiva is represented seated on the bull, embracing the goddess and offering his protection in the abhaya pose.



9. Umāsahitamūrti (उमासहितमूर्ति, உமாசகிதமூர்த்தி)

In this aspect, described in *Śilparatna* and *Aṃśumadbhedāgama*, Śiva is seated next to his spouse (Umā). His backhands are carrying the axe and buck; his right front hand is in *abhaya* and the left in *varada* or in *siṃhakarṇa* ("lion-ear") pose. The goddess is seated to Śiva's left. She has two arms and holds a flower in the right one.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 130-131.

Photo : Tiruttani (Chingleput dt., Tiruttani tk.), Śiva Vīraṭṭāneśvara temple. Stone. (IFI 5849-2) Late Chola, 12th cent.A.D.

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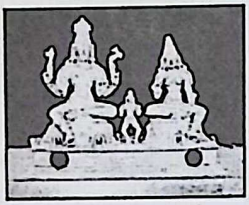

10. Somāskandamūrti (सोमास्कन्दमूर्ति, சோமாஸ்கந்தமூர்த்தி)

Somāskandamūrti is described in *Uttarakāmikāgama, Kāraṇāgama* and *Śilparatna.*

In this aspect Śiva is represented with his spouse (sa-Umā) and their son Skanda. The goddess is seated on the same seat along with Śiva, who is to her right. Śiva carries an axe and buck in his backhands and the front hands are in the *varada* and *abhaya* (fearless) or *siṃhakarṇa* pose. The goddess has two arms; she carries a lotus in her right hand and the left is in the *siṃhakarṇa* pose or may be resting on the seat. Skanda is represented between his parents, standing, dancing or seated. He may also be seated in the lap of the goddess.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 131-132. 17th cent.A.D.

Photo : Tirunāraiyūr (South Arcot dt., Kattumannargudi tk.), Śiva Sundareśvara temple. Bronze (IFI 10767-5).

11. Ardhanārīśvaramūrti (अर्धनारीश्वरमूर्ति, அர்த்தநாரீசுவரமூர்த்தி)

Half man-half woman Lord

One day when the gods and ṛṣis came to Mount Kailāsa to pay their homage to Śiva and Pārvatī, Bhṛṅgī ṛṣi, Śiva's devotee, refused to do *pradakṣiṇā* (circumambulating) around the divine couple. He had taken a vow to worship only Śiva and so abstained from honouring the goddess. Outraged, she reduced him to a skeleton. Bhṛṅgī could not stand any more and so Śiva gave him a third leg. The devotee danced with joy, praising Śiva. Pārvatī was annoyed and requested her spouse to be united with his own body. Bhṛṅgī would thus be obliged to go around both the divinities. However Śiva's devotee assumed the form of a beetle, pierced a hole in the androgynous body so that he could circumambulate only Śiva and therefore keep up his vow. Pārvatī admired his steadfastness and bestowed her grace on Bhṛṅgī.

Ardhanārīśvara is described in *Aṃśumadbhedāgama, Kāmikāgama, Kāraṇāgama, Suprabhedāgama* and *Śilparatna.* The right half of the figure is masculine and the left half-feminine. There may be two, four or even three arms (two on Śiva's side, only one on Pārvatī's). The asymmetry is also present in the hairstyle, ornaments and garments.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 321-332; Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, Chap. 8.

Photo : Source : Madras Museum. Origin : Tiruveṇgāḍu (Tanjavur dt.). Bronze 98 cm. (IFI 6749-5) late Chola.

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12. Hariharamūrti (हरिहरमूर्ति, ஹரிஹரமூர்த்தி)

Harihara combines Śiva (Hara) and Viṣṇu (Hari) in a single image. It is related in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* that Viṣṇu is reported to have said to a ṛṣi that he and Śiva were one, and that Śiva resided in him and manifested this composite form to the ṛṣi. The right half of the figure is that of Śiva, the left half is Viṣṇu. Harihara is described in *Uttarakāmikāgama, Suprabhedāgama, Śilparatna, Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa & Pūrvakāraṇāgama.*

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 332-337.

Photo : Namakkal (Salem dt., Namakkal tk.), Viṣṇu Raṅganātha temple and cave. Stone (IFI 4522-1). 8th cent.A.D. Here the figure holding a buck and a snake serpent (Śaivaite attributes) in his right hands, conch (Viṣṇu's attribute) in his upper left hand. The second left hand is simply resting on the hip. Harihara is surrounded by celestial beings.

13. Kaṅkāḷamūrti and Bhikṣāṭanamūrti (कङ्कालमूर्ति, भिक्षाटनमूर्ति; கங்காளமூர்த்தி, பிட்சாடனமூர்த்தி)

This episode is given in *Śivapurāṇa* and *Kūrmapurāṇa*. Once upon a time, the ṛṣis wanted to learn who was the real creator of the universe, and so went to the mountain Meru and asked Brahmā who, lost in Śiva's *māyā*, boasted that he himself was the Creator of the Universe. Viṣṇu in his turn claimed the title of the Creator of the worlds. The four Vedas and the sacred symbol O*m* then interceded to proclaim the superiority of Śiva, but it was not enough to end the dispute between the two divinities. It was then that a huge pillar of light appeared with Śiva in its middle. However Brahmā remained obstinate claiming the rank of Supreme Lord, his fifth head inflamed in rage and addressed him thus: "I know you. You were once born from my forehead. Take refuge in me". This enraged Śiva and he created Bhairava ("Terrible") and asked him to punish Brahmā for his arrogance. Bhairava cut off the fifth head of Brahmā, the one which committed the offence. Brahmā suffered temporary death, but soon revived himself through the power of his yoga and eventually accepted Śiva's superiority. However, to expiate the terrible sin of killing a brahmin, Bhairava was condemned to roam the three worlds begging for food in the skull of his victim which from then on remained stuck to his hand and followed by *Brahmahatyā*, (killing a brahmin). He thus showed the world the expiatory rite that would free the sin of

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Brahmahatyā. Wandering and visiting numerous holy places, Bhairava finally reached Viṣṇu's abode. The gatekeeper Viṣvaksena did not recognize the supreme Lord and did not allow him to enter. Bhairava killed him, carried his corpse and went to Viṣṇu to beg. Viṣṇu cut open Bhairava's forehead and blood flowed from it for a thousand years without filling Brahmā's skull. He then prayed to *Brahmahatyā* to leave Bhairava but in vain. Viṣṇu then advised Bhairava to go to Varanasi, the holy city that washes off all sins. Dancing with joy, Bhairava went to the holy city followed by Viṣṇu. When he reached Varanasi, *Brahmahatyā* disappeared, Brahmā's skull fell from Bhairava's hand and the place became known as Kapālamocana ("which freed the skull").

Kaṅkāḷa (skeleton) is the aspect where Śiva carries Viṣvaksena's body impaled on his trident. Bhikṣāṭana (beggar) is the form when he entered Dāruvana forest during his expiatory wanderings, a handsome and completely naked beggar, seducing the wives of ṛṣis.

These aspects of Śiva are described in *Aṁśumadbhedāgama, Kāmikāgama* and *Kāraṇāgama*. Kaṅkāḷa is standing erect, left leg firmly planted and the right slightly bent, suggesting movement. He is clothed, in contrast to Bhikṣāṭana. He carries a drum and on his shoulder is a stick, which is tied with Viṣvaksena's bones and ornamented with peacock feathers. He is wearing sandals, sign of his wanderings. One of his right hands is extending a leaf to a bounding deer on his right. To his left, a *gaṇa* is carrying a begging bowl on his head and wives of ṛṣis surround him. The same prescriptions are valid for Bhikṣāṭana, except that he is completely naked, wearing only snakes as ornaments, and carries a *kapāla*, a drum and a trident ornamented with peacock feathers.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 295-309.

Photo at left : Bhikṣāṭana. Tāramaṅgalam (Salem dt., Omalūr tk.), Śiva temple. Stone (IFI 80-7) 16th - 17th cent.A.D.

Photo at right : Kaṅkāla. Tiruchcheṅkāṭṭaṅkudi (Tatjavur dt., Nannilam tk.), Śiva Uttirāpadīśvara temple Stone (IFI 9482-7). Late Chola 12th cent. A.D.

14. Gaṅgādharamūrti (गङ्गाधरमूर्ति, கங்காதரமூர்த்தி)

One who carries Gaṅgā

The story is narrated in *Viṣṇupurāṇa, Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The sage Kapila reduced the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara to ashes. They could go to heaven only if their ashes were sprinkled with the water of the Gaṅgā. Bhagīratha, Sagara's descendant, performed severe austerities to bring the celestial river to earth. Gaṅgā granted his request, but her descent had to be checked, otherwise the earth would be pierced by the force of her fall. Bhagīratha then addressed Śiva who, being satisfied with Bhagīratha's austerities agreed to receive the river on his head. Gaṅgā came to earth, her impetuous flow

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winding through the labyrinth of Śiva's hair-locks, and purified the ashes of Bhagīratha's ancestors.

Śiva receiving Ganges in his hair is described in the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama, Kāmikāgama* and *Kāraṇāgama*. He is standing erect, one leg firmly planted on the earth and the other slightly bent. His front right hand is near the chin of Pārvatī, to his left, who is jealous of Gaṅgā, and he embraces her with his left hand. His other right hand is holding a lock of his hair, on which the figure of the goddess Gaṅgā is represented.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 313-320.

Photo : Koilpalayam (Tiruchchirappalli dt., Perambalur tk.), Śiva Cholīśvara temple. Stone (IFI 11274-11).

15. Viṣāpaharaṇamūrti (विषापहरणमूर्ति, விஷாபகரணமூர்த்தி)

One who took away the poison.

The legend is narrated in the *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Matsyapurāṇa, Skandapurāṇa*, etc. When the gods and asuras churned the ocean of milk to obtain ambrosia (*amṛta*), a dreadful poison (*kālakūṭa, halāhala*) escaped from it in deleterious clouds, threatening to suffocate the entire universe. Śiva swallowed the poison and kept it in his throat, which became blue. Śiva is then known as Nīlakaṇṭha, "blue-throated".

Śiva Viṣāpaharaṇa is described in *Śrītattvanidhi* and *Uttarakāraṇāgama*. He is holding the axe and deer in two of his hands, a bowl containing poison that he is about to drink in another and the last hand is in the *varada* pose. The goddess is to his left.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 356-358 ; Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, p. 145-152.

Photo : Source : Madras Museum. Origina : Kilappūdanūr (Tanjavur dt.). Bronze 63 cm (IFI 6802-9) 9th - 10th cent. A.D. In this figure, the sculptor alludes to the poison swallowed by Śiva by placing a snake in the lower left hand of the deity.

16. Caṇḍeśānugrahamūrti (चण्डेशानुग्रह, சண்டேசனுக்கிரகமூர்த்தி)

Favour granted to Caṇḍeśa

The tale is narrated in the *Periyapurāṇa*. One day the young Vicāraśarman saw a cowherd ill-treating a cow. Incensed, he decided to look after the cows of the village himself. The cows were very happy and yielded abundant milk, which began to flow from their udder. On seeing the wasted milk, Vicāraśarman collected the milk and being devoted to Śiva, poured it over liṅgas made of sand. The earlier cowherd spread the rumour that Vicāraśarman was milking the cows and wasted the milk by pouring it over sand

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mounds. The father of Vicāraśarman wanted to verify these accusations and in fact saw his son pouring milk over sand mounds. Furious, he kicked the sand mound that the boy had been worshipping. Vicāraśarman was roughly woken from his meditation and cut his father's leg with his axe. Śiva was pleased with the boy's devotion and appeared before him with his consort. He made him the head of his servants and the steward of his household under the name of Caṇḍeśa and crowned him with the flower garland worn by Him.

The aspect of Śiva bestowing his grace to Caṇḍeśa is described in *Aṃśumadbhedāgama, Uttarakāraṇāgama* and *Śilparatna.* Śiva is seated next to Pārvatī his right hand is in the *varada* pose and his left on Caṇḍeśa's head, or his right hand is holding the end of the flower garland and tying it round his devotee's head with the left hand. Caṇḍeśa is represented with handsjoined in the *añjali* pose, standing in front of Śiva or sitting at his feet.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 205-209.

Photo : Gangaikondacholapuram (Thiruchirappalli dt., Udaiyarpalayam tk.), Śiva Bṛhadīśvara temple Stone (IFI 9025-5). 11th cent.A.D.

17. Viṣṇvanugrahamūrti or Cakradānamūrti (चक्रदानमूर्ति, சக்ரதானமூர்த்தி)

Lord according grace to Viṣṇu: Lord offering *Cakra* to Viṣṇu.

This is narrated in the *Śivapurāṇa* (*Koṭirudrasamhitā*). Once upon a time the demons had become too powerful and troubled the gods unceasingly. Viṣṇu then did penance to obtain Śiva's grace, reciting his one thousand names, offering one lotus flower for each name. Śiva took away one of the flowers to test Viṣṇu's devotion. When Viṣṇu found that one flower was missing, he offered one of his eyes (which are often compared to lotus flowers). Śiva was so pleased with Viṣṇu's devotion that he offered him his *Sudarśanacakra*, with which Viṣṇu was able to vanquish the demons.

This aspect is described in *Uttarakāraṇāgama* and *Śrītattvanidhi.*

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 209-212.

Photo : Virkudi (Tatjavur dt., Nannilam tk.), temple Śiva Vīraṭṭeśvara. Bronze (IFI 383-5). 16th - 17th cent. A.D.

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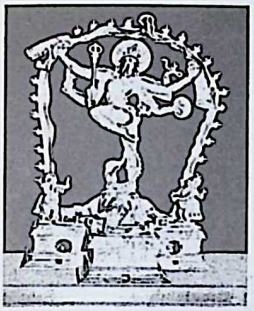

18. Gajāsurasaṃhāramūrti (गजासुरसंहारमूर्ति, கஜாசுரசம்ஹாரமூர்த்தி)

Destroyer of the elephant demon.

The legend is narrated in *Kūrmapurāṇa* and *Varāhapurāṇa*. According to the legend in *Kūrmapurāṇa*, a demon assuming the form of an elephant disturbed the meditations of sages who were gathered round a liṅga in Benares. Śiva came out of the liṅga, killed the elephant and took its skin as garment.

This aspect of Śiva is described in *Aṃśumadbhedāgama* and *Śilparatna*. When Śiva Gajāsaṃhāra has eight hands, his attributes are trident, *ḍamaru* and noose (*pāśa*) on the right; the *vismaya* pose, *kapāla* (skull as container) and elephant tusk on the left; the other two hands brandish the elephant skin, which is draped around the god. His left leg is on the head of the elephant, while the right leg is bent and lifted high.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 150-156.

Photo : Vaḷuvūr (Tanjavur dt., Mayuram tk.), Śiva Vīraṭṭeśvara temple. Bronze 128 X 104 cm. (IFI 7255-7). Late Chola, 11th - 12th cent. A.D.

19. Tripurāntakamūrti (त्रिपुरान्तकमूर्ति, திரிபுராந்தகமூர்த்தி)

Destroyer of Three Cities.

This episode is narrated in the *Mahābhārata* (*Karṇaparvan*) and *Śivapurāṇa* (*Rudrasaṃhitā*). The three sons of Tāraka, having performed severe penance, obtained three castles made of gold, silver and iron as boons from Brahmā. Harassed by the demons the gods went to Brahmā, who told them that the three castles could be destroyed only with a single arrow, which could be wielded only by Śiva and so the gods went to him. Śiva asked them half of their powers to undertake the task, and became the most powerful god. Viṣṇu became his arrow, the Vedas became his bow, and Brahmā his charioteer. Thus armed, Śiva destroyed the three castles and their occupants.

This aspect of Śiva is described in various Āgamas, including *Aṃśumadbhedāgama* and *Uttarakāraṇāgama*. Iconographic prescriptions vary. Śiva Tripurāntaka can be recognized by his large bow, and he is sometimes represented on a chariot driven by Brahmā.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 164-171 ; Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, p. 405-418.

Photo : Tiruvadigai (South Arcot dt., Panrutti tk.), temple Śiva Vīraṭṭeśvara. Stone (IFI 9500-1). 16th - 17th cent. A.D.

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20. Kālārimūrti (कालारिमूर्ति, காலாரிமூர்த்தி)

Kāla's enemy.

Mṛkaṇḍu ardently desired an heir. He prayed to Śiva, who asked him if he preferred to have many useless sons or only one son, remarkably intelligent but who would die at the age of sixteen years. The sage chose the latter alternative and in due course a son, Mārkaṇḍeya, was born to him. Mārkaṇḍeya came to know about his fate and went on a pilgrimage, visiting all the sacred places. One day, when he was worshipping the liṅga, Kāla (or Yama, god of death) came to take his life. Śiva rose from the liṅga and kicked him violently on the chest. Yama gave up his victim and Śiva blessed Mārkaṇḍeya to remain forever at the age of sixteen years. Thus the fate that condemned him to die at sixteen years could not be fulfilled.

This aspect of Śiva is described in *Aṃśumadbhedāgama, Kāmikāgama* and *Kāraṇāgama.*

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 156-164.

Photo : Tirukkadaiyūr (Tanjavur dt., Mayuram tk.), Śiva temple. Bronze (IFI 570-3). Late Chola 12th cent. A.D.

21. Śarabhamūrti (शरभमूर्ति, சரபமூர்த்தி)

The legend is narrated in the *Śiva Purāṇa* (*Śatarudrasaṃhitā*). After Viṣṇu, in his Narasiṃhāvatāra (half-man half-lion), killed the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, his destructive power was not abated. The terrified gods approached Śiva and prayed to him to intervene. Śiva tried to appease him but in vain. He then assumed the form of Śarabha, a fantastic animal with beak, crooks, two wings, big arms, four legs, strong claws sharp as diamonds and a long tail. Thundering, he hurled himself on Narasiṃha and killed him.

Śarabha is described in *Kāmikāgama, Śrītatvanidhi* and *Uttarakāraṇāgama.* He should be represented with two uplifted wings, four lion legs resting on the ground and four others lifted upwards. He has crooks and a tail. The upper part of his body is human, but his face is of a lion. With two of his legs he is carrying an anthropomorphic Narasiṃha, whose hands are joined in the *Añjali* pose.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 171-174.

Photo : Darasuram (Tanjavur dt. Kumbakonam tk.) Śiva Airāvateśvara temple. Stone (IFI 41-7). 12th cent. A.D.

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22. Bhairava (भैरव, பைரவர்)

Bhairava, "the horrific", is the terrible form of Śiva. It is this aspect that the god assumed to behead Brahmā. This episode is narrated, with variations, in several *Purāṇas*, especially: *Śivapurāṇa* (*Śatarudrasaṃhitā, Vidyeśvara-saṃhitā*), *Kūrmapurāṇa, Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, Skanda-purāṇa* (*Brahmakhaṇḍa, Kāśīkhaṇḍa*). Refer to Kaṅkāḷa and Bhikṣāṭanamūrti for this legend.

Several aspects of Bhairava are described in Sanskrit texts, but not all of them are directly related to the Brahmā's beheading episode, for example, *Āpaduddhāraṇa Bhairava* (described in *Uttarakāraṇāgama*), Mārtaṇḍa Bhairava (described in *Agnipurāṇa, Iśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, Śāradātilakatantra*), Svacchanda Bhairava (described in *Aparājitaprcchā, Mānasollāsa*), Svarṇākarṣaṇa Bhairava (described in *Mantramahodadhi, Svarṇākarṣaṇabhairavatantram*). In South India, where Bhairava images are numerous, the god often assumes the role of *Kṣetrapāla*, protector, and is the guardian of Śaivaite temples.

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 174-182; Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, Chapter 9.

Photo : Seranmādevi (Tirunelveli dt., Ambāsamudram tk.) Śiva Vaittinādasvāmi temple. Stone (IFI 7132-2). Late Chola, 12th cent. A.D. Here Bhairava is represented with his most common attributes in Tamil Nadu: ḍamaru and trident on the right, snake and kapāla on the left (the god often has pāśa instead of snake). His locks are arranged in a circle (jātamaṇḍala) and he is wearing a long necklace of small bells, snake ornaments and a snake as belt. A dog accompanies him, which is his vehicle (vāhana). The dehanchement figure is quite unusual in Tamil Nadu sculpture, which generally represents Bhairava in an erect pose (samabhaṅga).

23. Vīrabhadramūrti (वीरभद्रमूर्ति, வீரபத்திரமூர்த்தி)

The legend is narrated in *Kūrmapurāṇa, Bhāgavatapurāṇa* On one occasion, Dakṣa, Śiva's father-in-law, organized a big *yāga* (sacrifice) to which he invited all the gods except Śiva whom he did not like. Sati, Śiva's wife, went to Dakṣa's *yāga* despite her husband's reservations. Her father insulted her and so she committed suicide by throwing herself into the fire. Learning of her death, Śiva was enraged and from a lock of his hair he created Vīrabhadra who destroyed Dakṣa's *yāga*.

This aspect of Śiva is described in *Śrītattvanidhi, Kāraṇāgama* Vīrabhadra has a fierce face with side-tusks, and in his four hands he carries a sword, a shield, a bow and an arrow. He is wearing a garland of skulls and sandals on his feet. Sometimes on his right is the figure of Dakṣa with a goat's head and hands held in the *Añjali* pose.

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See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 182-188; Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva*, p. 315-330.

Photo : Kumbakonam (Tanjavur dt., Kumbakonam tk.), Śiva Vīrabhadrasvāmi temple. Bronze (IFI 497-10). 16th - 17th cent. A.D.

24. Naṭarāja (नटराज, நடராசர்)

King of dancing.

Śiva's dance is the symbol of his cosmic activity. His five activities (*pañcakṛtya*), viz., creation (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*), destruction (*saṃhāra*), illusion (*tirobhāva*) embodiment and grace (*anugraha*) are represented by the sound of the drum in his upper right hand, protection pose (*abhaya*), fire in his upper left hand, another hand in *gajahasta* pose (like an elephant's trunk) and the raised leg uplifted for worshipping by his devotees.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* lists 108 dance poses. Sanskrit iconography texts have described a number of Śiva's dances. The ones that are most often represented are *bhujaṅgatrāsa, lalita, catura* and *lalāṭatilaka.*

See T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, p. 223-270; David Smith, *The Dance of Śiva. Religion, Art and Poetry in South India*, Cambridge Studies in Religious Traditions 7, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Photo at left : Manappalli (Salem dt., Nāmakkal tk.), Śiva Bhīmeśvara temple. Bronze, 80 cm (detail), (IFI 9741-3). Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.

Photo at right : Tiruvālaṅkāḍu (Chingleput dt., Tiruttaṇi tk.), Śiva Devarsiṅgaperumān temple. Bronze, 130 cm (IFI 7985-5). 10th - 11th cent. A.D. This mode of athletic dance (ūrdhvatāṇḍava) represents the dance competition between Śiva and Kālī, where the god emerged victorious by raising his leg to the sky.

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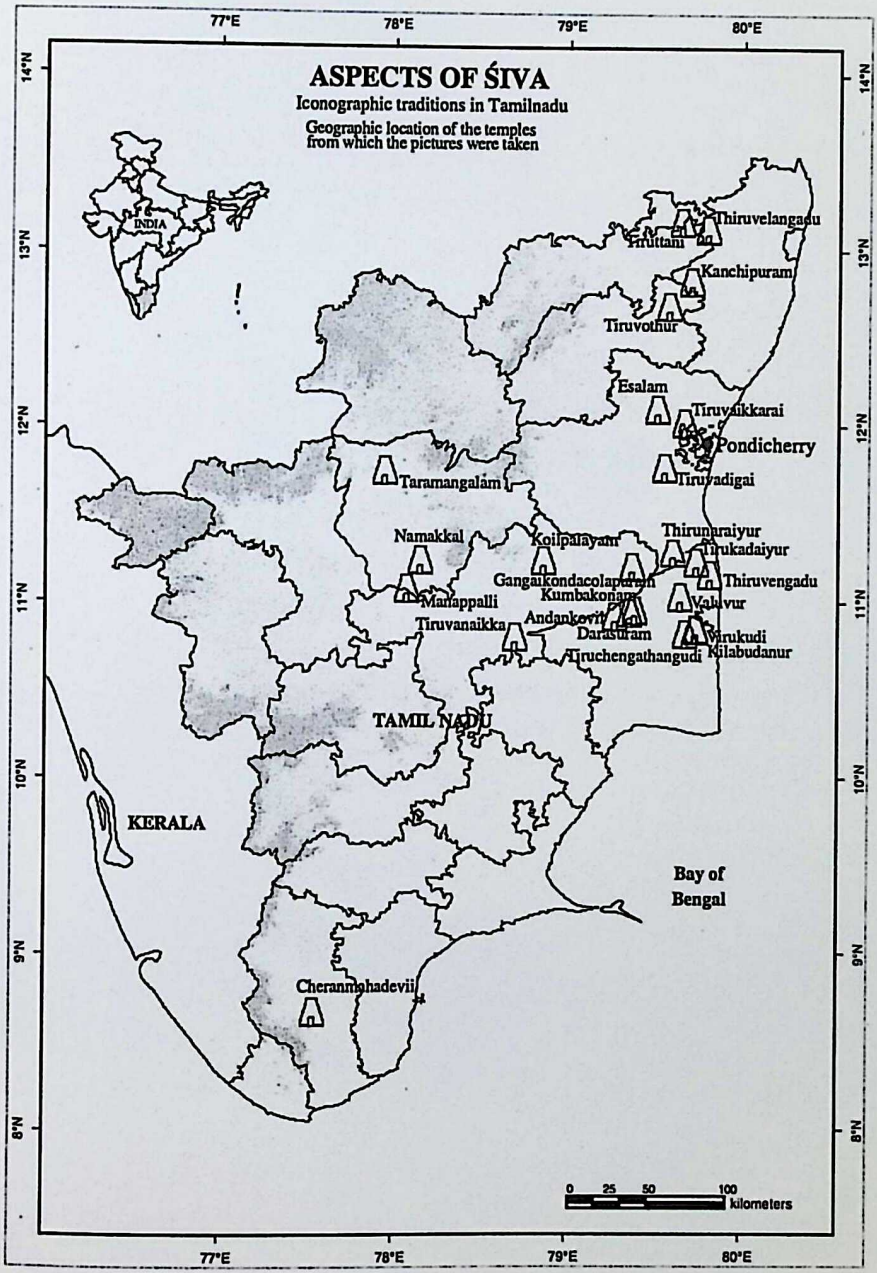

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